



# THE UAGC CHRONICLE

Fall-Winter 2023 Issue



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
**GLOBAL CAMPUS**

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## THE UAGC CHRONICLE: A FACULTY–FOCUSED PUBLICATION

*The UAGC Chronicle* supports the entire academic community's contribution to the UAGC mission of providing a community of caring and guidance for adult online learners. Therefore, our publication promotes content that addresses the theoretical underpinnings and practical execution of this mission: academic research on instructional best practices, curricular innovation, and student support strategies; examples and resources that foster a community of practice; news of the progress of institutional student success initiatives; professional development opportunities; and – most importantly – the stories and successes of the people who shape our university. Please check the Call for Submissions section for more information on submitting an article for consideration.

### LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



In this issue, you will find several articles that address the second UAGC critical student goal – [Support the completion of programs and educational goals considering student-based timelines](#). Contributors dive into structures to support students beyond their first academic year and through the completion of their programs, including what actions instructors can take to help this initiative. We invite you to learn more through industry research on the impact of poverty to the student experience in higher education and explore how to ignite grit within your students through encouragement and relationship-building. The UAGC Chronicle also met with Dean Justin Harrison about his return to the university and how we can support the School of General Studies mission.

We are excited to share that the UAGC Chronicle has achieved a historical milestone - the Summer 2023 Issue is currently the most viewed Chronicle ever published, with over 2,100 views. This accomplishment results from our goal to expand our reach within the academic community by building a more extensive support network. We are grateful for the help of our readers and contributors, none of this would have been possible without **you**.



Many thanks to the hardworking UAGC Chronicle staff for their time, effort, and talent in publishing this issue. These issues undergo many levels of review, edits, and revisions before you see the final product. We hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as we did creating it.

As the 2023 calendar year comes to an end, we wish our readers and contributors a Happy New Year. We look forward to continuing our work in the coming year, and we hope you come along for the ride!

Sincerely,

**Jackie Bullis**

Lead Faculty Support and Classroom Consultant, The UAGC Chronicle Editor

This publication aims to support and inform the diverse UAGC academic community. The UAGC Chronicle staff actively seeks contributions demonstrating engagement with and dedication to the UAGC mission and institutional goals. Learn more about contributing to The UAGC Chronicle. Please send your ideas, suggestions, and questions to [TheUAGCChronicle@uagc.edu](mailto:TheUAGCChronicle@uagc.edu)

Please use this link to share the UAGC Chronicle with your network!

## UNIVERSITY, PROGRAM, AND CURRICULUM NEWS

### INTERVIEW WITH THE DEAN

**Bill Davis, Program Chair, Department of Organizational Studies, Sally Deckard, Faculty Support and Classroom Consultant**



In the Summer issue of the Chronicle, Deans Tony Farrell and Maja Zelihic discussed their respective vision for the future of their colleges as UAGC is fully integrated into The University of Arizona. In this issue, Dr. Justin Harrison, Dean of the newly created School of General Studies, sits down with Bill Davis, Program Chair of the BA in Operational Management and Analysis in the Forbes School of Business and Technology®, and UAGC Chronicle Contributor, to share his thoughts on the impact the School of General Studies will make in achieving the UAGC critical student goals as this integration continues.

**BD:** To begin, would you share the structure and mission of the UAGC School of General Studies (SGS).

**JH:** I am the Dean, and we have Assistant Dean Mingzhen Bao and two department chairs, Allison Rief and Jennifer Vogel. Ali and Jen have a faculty group that includes Program Chairs and other full-time and associate faculty who work primarily within the general education courses and the Honors program. The lower-division, high-enrollment General Education courses live within the SGS. Clifford Blizzard and Mark Hnytka lead the Honors program.

We are looking to the future, and our charge is to help the institution open new educational pathways for students that include meaningful credentials, certificates, and other forms of educational opportunities and content. We also align with the vision of providing those pathways into UAGC and the University of Arizona. The University of Arizona has programmatic offerings that we do not, such as a data intelligence program and engineering programs, and we have programs that they do not. We have an opportunity to work collaboratively with our UA partners to meet the needs of all students and link them to their desired programs and preferred methods of completing their education, whether online or on campus.

Ultimately, we focus on student support and success leading to degree completion. A lot of great work has been done with 52-week cohort retention over the past three years, leading to removing the WSCUC notice of concern. We need to keep building on that momentum. We need to actively engage with our students in their general education experience, especially during the first seven courses, and support them in their times of need. This includes first-year students who have transferred to UAGC, with a particular focus on those bringing fewer than 20 transfer credits, especially those with zero credits, continuing to develop the secret sauce to help them progress and succeed.

**BD:** Open enrollment is a challenge, and we are all working to meet that challenge. You mentioned new educational pathways. How would you describe the School of General Studies' approach to the critical student goal of providing high-value credentials with marketable skills, and how can the SGS enhance student employability?

**JH:** Right now, we oversee general education, so no actual credentials come out of that. That said, another focus of the School of General Studies is based on a larger vision. This includes the possibility of bringing back the associate degree in military studies. If approved, that could be an excellent pathway for our military students so that they could earn that associate degree credential along the way to a bachelor's and potentially graduate program. We also plan to potentially roll out an associate of applied science degree. That would be a 2-to-3-year vision, but we must consider the future. There are other ideas about associate degree offerings that would allow students to gain that credential along their desired educational path. It is pretty daunting for low-credit students to look down a pathway that is 5 to 6 years in length for a bachelor's degree. Creating the AA and AAS degrees along the way aligns with our critical goal of creating meaningful credentials and providing a more digestible educational experience for older adult learners with numerous other responsibilities. Another area of potential ideas is the undergraduate and graduate certificates that the University of Arizona already has to offer. It is important to figure out if we can integrate our students into these certificate offerings instead of

reinventing the wheel by creating our own certificates. Our institutions need to work together with the strengths we both have to provide the best outcomes for students.

We do have certifications and credentials available through UAGC, such as the Education Assistant Certification that is externally recognized and the SHRM Human Resource Management Certifications that are being built out. There are models out there, such as Google credential programs, that we can look to and ask if we could partner with Google or other external businesses and groups to have our students build those offerings, such as project management, data analytics, etc., into their programs along the way. There are a lot of opportunities there, and they relate significantly to employability. Employers want employees with strong reading skills, writing skills, effective oral communication skills, and the ability to analyze data and visually represent it so that people can understand it. Add to these skills the values of diversity, equity, and belonging, as well as collegiality and the ability to work and collaborate with co-workers, and we have a fruitful ground for how we think about developing all of these things in our students now and into the future.

**BD:** How will courses in the School of General Studies support students in achieving degrees that are in demand? You have touched on this, but can you just summarize it for us. How do these courses help students meet job market employability demands?

**JH:** If you look at our general education competencies and requirements, they have been developed with a focus on practically applicable skills for life and work. For example, in our ethics course, we have the students choose a topic of interest to them that impacts them and their community and then apply what they have learned from the ethical theories to the issue. What they're learning to do at that moment is to advocate for an argument about something that they care about. For example, one student wrote about ranch owners' rights versus protection laws for wolves in the state of Wyoming because her family owns a ranch. She wants the wolves to survive but doesn't want them to eat her cattle. So now she can take that argument and approach her local councils and political leaders and make an argument that tries to balance the concerns of both the ranchers and the natural wildlife. The faculty have done a great job of creating these types of examples and will continue to think about them as they build the curriculum and their courses.

In addition to practical applications, our academic team also focuses on preparing students to succeed in their programs. We take an approach where we develop fundamental competency skills such as goal setting, time management, digital fluency, research skills, written and oral communication skills, and critical thinking to help them progress through their general education experience and develop success. We have intentionally created a centralized curriculum that builds on itself and gets students to the point where they can go into their programs and succeed in the demands of the writing, thinking, and research that will be asked of them there. Ultimately, the more we can do to develop these skills, the more likely the students will find long-term success at UAGC.

**BD:** Moving forward, how does the School of General Studies plan to support the completion of programs and educational goals considering student-based timelines.

**JH:** Completion was one of the items in the recent letter from WSCUC. They essentially said, you are showing improvement in retention, now, also make sure that you are focusing on completion. The School of General Studies seeks to support CAS, FSBT, and their students in completing their degrees. At this point, completion, to me, translates as graduation. For the sake of simplicity, let's just think of completion as graduation. Because most UAGC students have their Gen Ed early in their academic careers, we have learned a great deal about retention initiatives and engaging with students in a way that helps them succeed at these critical early courses. Much of what we have learned can be applied in CAS and FSBT programs, and we want to assist program chairs and all faculty to support students in completing their degrees. While SGS isn't working with a majority of students as they complete their degrees, we do have them during their most precarious times, and the better we can do on the front end, the more students will make it through their programs and ultimately achieve their completion goals.

**BD:** As you said, it is about getting students across that finish line. Along the way to that finish line, what are you anticipating as student recognition and milestone celebrations that can keep students motivated?

**JH:** These are all great questions because they align with many of the conversations going on. I think we have a lot of opportunities to celebrate reaching a certain point in their degree: 90 credits you are a senior, 60 credits a junior, and 30 credits, a sophomore. We are beginning to recognize students achieving good grades in their classes; that encouragement is meaningful for them. If students can integrate an associate degree into their bachelor's degree program, that would be a milestone to celebrate. People have a lot to do, and very often, we may be handling negative situations. We don't often take the time to celebrate the good. Why can't we give students a certificate to celebrate that they are done with the gen ed classes and can now move on to their degree area of study? I must be intentional about this and lead the SGS team to put the time in our calendars to celebrate students' accomplishments. We will focus our attention on recognizing them and trying to develop their sense of self-efficacy and confidence.

**BD:** And they can take that back to the workplace and say, "Hey, look what I did." So here is the final question: What other goals and initiatives is the School of General Studies focusing on, and how can the greater UAGC community contribute to those goals?

**JH:** There is an upcoming general education requirement revision based on the Arizona Board of Regents and their requirements, which now govern how we operate. Now that we are autonomous and part of the University of Arizona, there is an opportunity to move away from the legacy general education approach that we have taken. This is exciting, but it is a big project. This creates an opportunity to map more programmatic courses to our general education requirements, which will open more electives for students and provide positive experiences for our students. Earlier, I mentioned the creation and return of certain associate degree programs. If and when that happens, we'll be focused on growth in those areas, getting the enrollments up, ensuring that the programs are of high quality, and then ensuring that we can get students through to completion.

Additionally, we are looking at alignment with current competencies and providing more transferability for students. We are consistently revising courses and working to make them more interesting and engaging for our students. And, of course, retention. We have a retention project beginning relatively soon that involves reaching out more directly to struggling students and working to meet them at their point of need. The goal here is to really move the needle by direct intervention in a positive way.

**BD:** Justin, I appreciate your time today, and all you and your team are doing with the School of General Studies. This is definitely an exciting time for UAGC. I know your team is working hard, and we are very fortunate to have you back at UAGC.

## BEYOND RETENTION: SUPPORTING THE COMPLETION OF EDUCATIONAL GOALS

**Stephani Kilby, Director, Student Success**



UAGC Critical Student Goal #2 articulates the university's commitment to support the completion of programs and educational goals considering student-based timelines. This goal aims to ensure structures are in place to support students beyond their first academic year and through the completion of their programs. The rate of UAGC Bachelor students who graduate within six years, which is a measure aligned with WSCUC, declined from 20% for the 2011-12 cohort to 18% for the 2015-16

cohort. Master's degree graduation rate has seen small but incremental, improving from 48% for the 2015-16 cohort to 54% for the 2018-19 cohort (UAGC Data Management, 2022). Given these graduation rate trends and UAGC's commitment to the success of all students, it is evident that Critical Student Goal #2 needs to drive university-wide efforts to embrace the whole student lifecycle and ensure students have both an exceptional academic experience and access to necessary support and resources to achieve their educational goals, up to and including graduation. To achieve the critical student goal of supporting the completion of programs and educational goals, all faculty and staff need to understand what the goal entails, how their respective roles connect to the success of our students, and why the time for action is now.

### 17,000 Degrees/Certificates

In July 2023, with the support of the UAGC Advisory Council, the UAGC Executive Leadership Team approved the following target as a measure of achieving Critical Student Goal #2:

*UAGC will award 17,000 degrees/certificates by July 1, 2025*

This target focuses on all degrees conferred in an undergraduate or graduate degree program and the Post-Baccalaureate Teaching Certificate program between July 1, 2023, and July 1, 2025. It incorporates historical UAGC trends over the past five years while adding an element of aspiration by stretching the goal beyond what the graduation forecast shows UAGC might achieve.

The target of 17,000 degrees/certificates explicitly connects to the intent and spirit of UAGC Critical Student Goal #2. It puts the focus on students who can graduate within the next two years based on their individual degree trajectory. This includes students who are currently active and working toward their degree, students who are close to degree completion but currently inactive, and those who are in a position to both start and complete a program within the next two years. It requires that UAGC have structures in place to engage with students who are on track and to support students who encounter challenges that pull them off course. The target number is grounded in evidence but balances ambition and realism. Many initiatives that drive toward this goal will also support improvement toward WSCUC targets that focus more specifically on the time it takes for students to graduate. Most importantly, there is a clear call to action that requires UAGC as a whole to align in support of our students achieving their educational goals. When students succeed, UAGC succeeds.

### **A Time for Action**

With every degree/certificate awarded comes the potential for exciting new opportunities for our students. Along with improved job prospects and better financial security, individuals with higher levels of education enjoy increased access to healthcare and retirement options. They are more inclined to adopt healthy lifestyles, actively participate in their communities, and have the means to offer better opportunities for their children (Ma et al., 2019). Higher education can also instill a lifelong love of learning and curiosity, motivating adult learners to continue their education and development beyond their initial degree.

With every degree/certificate awarded, UAGC faculty and staff play a pivotal role in shaping the future, empowering students to unlock their full potential and positively impact the world. Consider how you engage with students and what role you play in their educational journey. Ask students about their experiences and share yours with them. Connect them with resources to support their learning. Celebrate a milestone. Find out what motivates them to continue down their chosen degree path. Encourage them to think about what they want to accomplish once they earn their degree. Let's each take proactive steps to support and inspire our students as they walk their path, and together, we will celebrate their achievements as well as our own.

The time for action is now. How will you contribute? Send your thoughts to [SuccessTogether@uagc.edu](mailto:SuccessTogether@uagc.edu). I would love to hear about the commitment you are making to contribute to the success of our students and the achievement of our four critical student goals.

### **References**

Ma, J., Pender, M., & Welch, M. (2020, January). *Education Pays 2019: The benefits of higher education for individuals and society*. CollegeBoard.  
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## CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

### SCAFFOLDING SUPPORT: EMPOWERING NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

**Dajana Yoakley, Associate Faculty, Department of Health Sciences**



The most important predictor of student success for struggling students is the relationship with the instructor. A positive and supportive instructor/student relationship is key to scaffolding!

Non-traditional students face unique challenges due to their age, diverse responsibilities, and varying enrollment patterns. Balancing work, family, and education can lead to feeling overwhelmed, pressured, and ultimately, burnt out. Addressing time management stressors is crucial to student success. This article will explore how faculty can employ the concept of scaffolding to effectively support non-traditional students through these stressors, using specific examples and providing actionable scaffolding suggestions.

In the context of professor support for students in higher education, scaffolding refers to the process of providing structured, tailored assistance to learners. Like the scaffolding around a building under construction, this support is temporary and gradually phased out as the student gains confidence and independence in their academic pursuits. Scaffolding encompasses a range of strategies designed to meet students where they are, offer guidance, and empower them to navigate their educational journey successfully.

One of the primary stressors for non-traditional students is the perceived lack of time. Juggling work, family, and coursework can feel like an insurmountable task. Faculty can play a pivotal role in recognizing and addressing these challenges. Below are actionable scaffolding suggestions that faculty can employ to ease time management stressors.

- Provide well-defined, realistic assignment deadlines, allowing ample completion time.
- Offer flexible late policies to accommodate work and family commitments, as long as students are meeting [university attendance requirements](#).
- Maintain open lines of communication, creating a space for students to voice concerns and seek guidance on time management techniques.

In an era inundated with digital distractions, staying focused on coursework can be a significant challenge. Faculty can guide non-traditional students in developing mindfulness practices to enhance their concentration. These scaffolding suggestions can help students develop a practice of mindfulness.

- Encourage students to take mindful pauses when notifications arise, fostering present-moment awareness.

- Share success stories of individuals like Bill Gates, highlighting the power of effective time management and focus.
- Suggest time management tools or techniques that assist in prioritizing tasks and reducing digital interruptions.

Non-traditional students often find themselves at the bottom of their to-do lists. Faculty can underscore the critical importance of self-care and offer practical strategies for its integration. These scaffolding suggestions support students in meeting those self-care needs.

- Advocate for self-inclusion on the daily to-do list, emphasizing that self-care is the foundation for sustained productivity.
- Introduce analogies, such as the airplane oxygen mask principle, to stress the significance of self-care in supporting others.
- Provide sleep hygiene, nutrition, and hydration resources, emphasizing their role in maintaining physical and mental equilibrium.

Rather than resorting to self-criticism, faculty can encourage non-traditional students to develop a compassionate inner dialogue during challenging times. This shift in mindset can foster resilience and growth. Here are some suggestions for assisting students in practicing self-compassion.

- Offer guidance on cultivating self-compassion through affirmations and positive self-talk.
- Create a safe space for students to share their struggles and concerns, validating their experiences.
- Provide constructive feedback framed in a supportive and encouraging manner, nurturing a growth-oriented mindset.

By embracing the scaffolding approach, faculty can empower non-traditional students to overcome time management stressors and thrive academically. Recognizing their unique challenges, providing tailored support, and fostering a compassionate learning environment can make all the difference. Like a building supported by scaffolding during construction, non-traditional students can stand strong and succeed with the right support.

## THE POWER OF CARING

**Matt Galloway, Student Care Manager, Student Affairs**



The holiday season is here for many across the globe, and with it comes a range of feelings and experiences. For some, it's joy and celebration. It's a much-needed vacation or time spent with family. It's a time of traditions and a chance to make new memories. For others in the UAGC community, it's a reminder of loss, whether of people, pets, places, or security. It's an exacerbation of mental and physical health conditions. It's an increase in overall feelings of distress and added pressures. For many of us, it's a combination of these possibilities. So, as the dark

and cool of winter grows closer to the fleeing daylight and warmth of fall, remember there is always an opportunity this time of year. That opportunity is empathy. It's patience. It is our second critical goal of supporting students to complete their programs and educational journey. It is, above all else, the UAGC culture of care and our shared interest in the well-being of students and each other.

### **Holiday Stressors to Consider**

**Mental** – Holidays mean something different for each of us, and our mental health may decline. This may be someone's first holiday following a significant loss or a reminder that it will be their last. Extra hours for hourly employees trying to secure funds for holiday events can mean less time for self-care. The general change to shorter days and less time outside due to seasonal conditions can lower our mood and limit our physical activity and socialization.

**Physical** – All kinds of stress can impact our physical health. Pre-existing conditions may respond badly to changes in temperature. Healthcare appointments can become harder to secure. Surges in the flu, COVID-19, and other transmittable illnesses are on the rise and may affect our young children and elderly community members in particular.

**Financial** – The current cost of housing and level of inflation means income doesn't stretch as far as it did before. Whether your love language or not, gift giving and contributing to gatherings can become a burden when funds are already tight. With late-year layoffs not uncommon, holiday job loss can mean months before employment is obtained due to pending budgets, anticipated closures and position availability, and applicant competition.

**Personal** – Children may be out of school or have reduced access to childcare. Increased need can lead to more difficulty connecting to resources, and those regularly utilized may become unavailable as they await a new budget cycle. Already present, food insecurities can become critical. Fear of not being believed or existing stigma may curb a willingness to reach out.

**Academic** – Performance may be impacted by non-academic hardships. Unsuccessful grades can exacerbate feelings of failure. Course drops or required retakes may eliminate excess fund stipends that a student was relying on for other living expenses. Denied requests for support or unresponsive processes can lead to feeling unwelcome or contribute to imposter syndrome.

### **Listen with Care**

We are regularly reminded that the success of this community of non-traditional learners requires grit, determination, and resilience. Like staff and faculty, we know that students are navigating various life events. With this in mind, we celebrate their wins and strive for them to feel included as a part of the University of Arizona Global Campus. This holiday season:

- Continue to give time to your students, whether simply a listening ear, a source of support and guidance, or a conduit to resources.

- Listen, and let them know you're there with them. Use this as a chance to create a meaningful connection and fill a gap that may be present for someone else.
- Believe your students when they report impact or express need. Might people take advantage of our culture of care? I'm sure it has happened. But a culture of care doesn't mean granting an incomplete grade with only an introduction, a week three reply to a peer, and a week five quiz submitted. It's also not about making people prove their hardship. Acknowledge what is shared, that it takes courage to do so, and that it might leave them feeling vulnerable. Let this person know you want to know more and that their experience matters.
- Maintain a mindset that believes anyone can be successful with the right tools and access. Not everyone has someone who has walked this path and speaks the language of higher education. Be graceful as students work through impacts and become that person with the map for someone else. Meet them where they are, and don't make assumptions about what they are or aren't doing. Our role is to recognize our power as faculty and administrators and to partner with our students as we look for opportunities to support *their* definition of success.

There are few things more powerful than feeling heard and valued. Keep this alive!

### **Remember Your Resources**

At UAGC, we all share the responsibility for the Culture of Care and student success. In addition to the care you are already positioned to provide, remember you've got backup!

**UAGC Red Folder** – Red Folder is a support resource used across higher education institutions to engage the broader university community in supporting students experiencing crises. Use the [UAGC Red Folder](#) to RECOGNIZE signs of distress, RESPOND with care, REFER for support, and identify RESOURCES related to assisting students and increasing your knowledge.

**Student Advocate HELPlne** – Student Advocates assist students experiencing extreme personal hardships and critical life impacts by providing short-term de-escalation, assistance locating support resources in their local area, and action planning to address the educational impact of situational stressors. Submit an [Online Care Report](#) so a Student Advocate can reach out and offer support to the student.

**Access and Wellness** – In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended, the University of Arizona Global Campus prohibits discrimination based on a disability. Reasonable accommodations will be granted to students who present appropriate documentation of a disability and are otherwise qualified to participate in their specific program of study. Visit the [Office of Student Access and Wellness](#) website for more information.

**The Resolution Center** – The UAGC community benefits from informal processes and formal procedures that encourage prompt and equitable resolution of complaints and concerns that students may have about implementing policies and procedures that govern the institution. Additionally, the UAGC community also benefits from other support services that work to connect students with appropriate

resources for their needs. Submit a [Report of Concern](#) to connect your student with the Resolution Center.

**Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT)** – [UAGC BIT](#) is a cross-departmental group that holistically addresses elevated behavioral concerns through an integrated process of communication, education, prevention, problem identification, assessment, intervention, and response to incidents. This can include but is not limited to, threatening words or actions and/or acts motivated by hatred and discrimination. UAGC BIT intervenes to take necessary action, preventing preventable violence and facilitating appropriate departmental referrals.

**Student Support Resource Guide (SSRG)** – The [SSRG](#) provides you with information and referral pathways for several UAGC resources, including Title IX, Student Conduct, and more. It also includes guidance related to incompletes, Tuition Credit Requests, and tips for navigating difficult conversations.

**UAGC Employee Assistance Program**- With the [Cigna Employee Assistance & Work/Life Support Program](#), you can get support for everyday issues and life challenges. The program is here to connect you with real people who can help you find real solutions to life's challenges. These services are all confidential and available at no additional cost to you and anyone in your household.

We are all in a position to make a difference this holiday season. Take time to care for yourself, be kind to those you interact with, and commit to leading with care.

## GIVING STUDENTS THE RIGHT TOOLS TO COMPLETE THEIR PROGRAMS

**Louie Centanni, Outreach Writing Consultant, UAGC Writing Center**



There's a quote attributed to Abraham Lincoln about how given six hours to chop down a tree, he'd spend the first four sharpening the axe. In his eyes, it was unwise to expend needless energy when a better tool could ease the burden of an arduous task.

Yet often, our students squander precious energy because they don't even know there are tools available for their work, let alone "sharper" ones. Worse than using "dull axes," they're

encountering complex tasks (in this case, academic ones) with no help whatsoever. The hours they lose snowball into deep stress, diminishing their capacity to complete programs on time.

As faculty members at higher learning institutions, we get frustrated when students fall behind when assignments are submitted in an unsatisfactory condition—or maybe even not submitted at all. After all, we are immersed in our discipline and curriculum: Shouldn't everyone be?

The reality is that our students are often "swinging their axes" at a lot of things at once: coursework, full-time employment, family responsibilities, and so much more. They genuinely want to succeed in their academic journey—and when their lives go as expected, they often do.

But for many of them, the smallest turn of events—a sick child, an unannounced double shift at work, a flat tire—can throw their lives into a downward spiral, making them feel that their only options are to submit something subpar or drop the axe altogether and take a break from school. Either of these decisions can directly impact their ability to complete programs and achieve their educational goals on their own timelines. But what can we give students that will make their lives—and ours, as graders—better?

### **What can we realistically do to help?**

Recent research suggests that the primary struggles for nontraditional students fall under one of four main themes: “family, support, generational gaps, and community” (Beckwith, 2023, p. 76). This conclusion is unsurprising, to be sure, but if we look closely, it can also shed light on how instructors can meaningfully assist students using those metaphoric dull axes.

We can do little to alleviate our students' family, generational, or community struggles, but providing support where students often need it most—creating more *time* for everything—may have a snowball effect that positively impacts all other areas of concern.

That's where SupportU comes in.

### **What is SupportU, and how can it create more time for students?**

While instructors can only be in one place doing one thing at a time, SupportU (the catchall name for Library, Writing Center, and Tutoring services) gives students access to myriad tools and services that can nudge them in the right direction without adding to either the student's *or* the instructor's plate.

One such instrument is the [SupportU Toolkit](#), a dynamic, interactive digital tackle box that helps students find the most appropriate resource for the task.

Perhaps a student has a five-page paper due in under 24 hours, and they are staring at a blinking cursor on a blank page. Instead of feeling deflated and defeated, they can click through the [SupportU Toolkit](#) to discover assignment guides on the UAGC Writing Center website or find live tutoring opportunities to get them started and save valuable minutes. This one small bridge to a series of shortcuts could be the difference between a student who produces high-quality work and one who gives up completely.

All too often, instructors feel their only line of defense outside direct support is telling a student to “go to the library” or “find a tutor.” Another helpful device at your disposal is the [Which Academic Support Should You Use? interactive](#). Serving as a sort of WebMD Symptom Checker for students who don’t know where to turn on research and writing tasks, this interactive poses a few simple questions and then takes students to a specific place that will *actually* help them, rather than directing them to a sea of databases hoping they land on a diamond in the digital stacks.

Ultimately, helping students complete their programs on their timelines requires more than delivering pedagogically sound information or giving them more time. Given the realities of the barriers they face, it takes setting students up for success.

By handing our students the right tool for the right job, we can exponentially impact the success they experience in the classroom and beyond.

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## IT TAKES GRIT

**Dana Hill, Faculty, Department of Health Sciences**



Student success is our goal as educators. At UAGC, we sincerely care about each student and want to see them succeed throughout their educational journey and life after school. As educators, we often wonder what we can do, or do more of, to help our students succeed and meet their goals on their timelines. When thinking about student success, the word grit came to mind. Many educators got their degrees and found themselves in their current roles because they naturally had or developed grit. You may be thinking: What is grit? Grit is what pushes someone to do whatever it takes to succeed in whatever endeavor they are pursuing. It is that dedication, commitment, desire, and persistence to get through all obstacles to achieve an end goal. Grit is what makes people successful! Grit is what can help our students meet their educational goals on their timelines.

### How do we know if our students have grit?

First, we must take time to look at each student as an individual and analyze their situation. What do we know about a student? Did they tell you something in the introduction that helps you know more about their lives, work, families, or struggles? When you read their stories, do you consider if you have ever been in a similar situation, share commonalities, or how you would feel if you were dealing with the same issues? Do they possibly have challenges with living situations, work situations, or home life situations that may affect their work? Some students may talk about past successful educational endeavors, such as degrees already obtained. If they have already been successful, how likely will they be successful in their current or future endeavors? Maybe the most important consideration is: Does this student's story show that they have grit?

### How can we help to ignite grit?

How can we help students get grit or capitalize on the grit they already have (may not even know)? Here are a few things we can do as educators to help ignite grit in students:

- Suggest they schedule appointment times on a calendar for themselves to do their schoolwork and then keep that appointment as if it is a very important meeting and cannot be missed.

Studies indicate that continual practice and engagement in the subject is a determinant of grit and successful accomplishments (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009).

- Encourage active learning by giving additional learning resources to engage higher-level thinking and more participation in discussions and course activities. Researchers share that active learning is a characteristic of persons with grit and helps them reach their end goal by their timeline (Reed & Jeremiah, 2017).
- Incorporate problem-solving and interactive learning into the coursework. Studies suggest that interactive/experiential learning is a characteristic of persons with grit and helps them meet their end goal (Li, J., & Li, Y., 2021).
- Plan teaching methods using learners' perspectives and values so they will have a deeper and more personal understanding of what they are learning. Persons with grit have a personal connection with what they learn, and this helps to propel them forward (Li, J., & Li, Y., 2021).
- Ask students to return to their "why" and share their goals with their peers. Studies suggest that persons with enthusiasm and determination demonstrate grit and help students stay on track to meet their goals (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009; Reed & Jeremiah, 2017).
- Be on the lookout for opportunities to connect students to the right resources to help them have every tool needed to overcome obstacles in their learning path. Some of these resources may help students solve issues and learn as they go, contributing to the building blocks of grit (Che, Strang, & Vajjhala, 2021).

Lastly, we can help students by extending the Culture of Care by sharing your own story. Let students see your humanness and know of the struggles you had as a student and how you overcame those struggles, being a model of grit. Making connections with students helps them know that we care and are in their corner, helping them every step of the way.

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## RESEARCH

### THE IMPACT OF POVERTY ON HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

**Diana Boggan, Faculty Development and Coaching Specialist, Faculty Affairs**



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*"Higher education cannot be a luxury reserved for a privileged few. It is an economic necessity for every family. And every family should be able to afford it." Barack Obama, 2012*

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In a post-pandemic world, our nation has faced an incredible amount of change and loss—loss of life, income, jobs, security, and more. The economy has yet to fully recover from the effects of the pandemic. Amidst this global emergency, preliminary research found that the pandemic highlighted and exacerbated inequalities in education, particularly those in historically marginalized and underserved communities (Office for Civil Rights, 2021). As an institution serving a population of students whose majority is within this group of the marginalized and underserved, it is imperative to examine and consider the academic adversities these students face. This article focuses on the impact of poverty among higher education students, informing educators of these students' needs so conversations on how to best support them can begin.

#### **Student Snapshot**

Meet Anita. She is a 28-year-old woman from Texas. She is divorced, has a 9-year-old daughter, and works full-time as a restaurant server. Anita recently decided to work on her dream of being the first in her family to go to college by enrolling in an online bachelor's degree program. Having been out of high school for ten years, it was an adjustment to get back into the habit of balancing work, school, and family. However, Anita worked hard and did well for the first six months.

One day, she received a call at work that her daughter was not feeling well and needed to be picked up from school. Anita left work early and took her daughter to urgent care. Her daughter had to stay home from school for several days, which meant that Anita missed several shifts at work. She does not have paid sick leave, so she had to work additional hours once her daughter recovered to make up for the loss in income.

Between caring for a sick child, missing work, working double shifts, paying for medical expenses, and the added stress, Anita fell behind in her classwork. Exhausted, discouraged, and unable to catch up, she eventually dropped out of school.

## **Academic Adversity**

Anita is an example of a student from a marginalized community. She went into college with fewer resources and was at a disadvantage from the start. She lacked the support system to help her care for her sick child so she could continue working and the financial means to cover that loss of income. As a first-generation student, she may have lacked role models in her family who could have helped her navigate the school system and find the support she needed. Unfortunately, Anita is not alone.

According to a study covering the COVID-19 pandemic, academic adversities that impacted marginalized and underserved families at a higher rate than other groups included gaps in technical ability; difficulty communicating with instructors and staff; struggling with work, life, and school balance; affording essential supplies, equipment, and services; and lack of social and cultural experiences that support life as a higher education student (Deng, 2022). A common contributing factor to these barriers and a characteristic of marginalized groups is economic status, meaning these students are more likely to be living in or near poverty than other demographic groups.

## **The Statistics**

In the U.S., 37 million people live in poverty, roughly 12% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). This number is equivalent to nearly the entire population of California. Also shown in U.S. Census Bureau statistics, single mothers, the unemployed, minorities, and those with no high school diploma or no college experience have the highest rates of poverty.

## **UAGC Demographics**

Most students at UAGC are minorities and low-income, where 65% are women, 48% are non-white, and 50% are Pell Grant recipients (a federal grant for low-income students) (UAGC, n.d.). This is significant to this conversation on poverty, given that minorities and low-income families without college degrees are more likely to be impacted by poverty.

## **The Consequences of Poverty**

The consequences of poverty are both numerous and complex. Those living in poverty are more likely to experience:

- food scarcity,
- housing insecurity,
- lack of healthcare,
- mental health issues such as anxiety and depression,
- chronic diseases such as high blood pressure, asthma, allergies, and diabetes,
- crime as either a victim or a perpetrator,
- lower levels of education,
- and higher unemployment rates (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2007).

One can imagine the vicious cycle this creates when considering these elements together.

The consequences of poverty are not limited to those living in poverty. Higher poverty rates negatively affect a country's economic growth and healthcare issues and lead to higher rates of crime, which all require funding and resources for anti-poverty programs (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2007).

### **The Impact on Higher Education Students**

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau (2022) shows that poverty rates fall as the level of education rises, suggesting what many assume to be true—those with at least a bachelor's degree are more likely to have better income opportunities and a better chance of escaping poverty. It may sound simple to some to enroll in college and get a degree. However, for those in marginalized and underserved communities who may be facing generational poverty, it is anything but simple.



The consequences of poverty were earlier described as numerous and complex. When looking at the population of students in higher education, the complexities of those consequences do not diminish; they are increased. As mentioned, food scarcity and housing insecurity alone can cause anxiety, depression, and illness. Furthermore, evidence from Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs, a theory on human motivation, and more recent studies such as Wright et al.'s (2020) "When Your Students are Hungry and Homeless" share an abundance of research showing that being unable to meet basic needs can negatively affect academic achievement.

Besides the obvious effects of poverty on basic needs like food and housing, when it comes to learning, students in poverty may not have the social, cultural, or technical background that prepares them for higher education (Deng, 2022). While students in poverty face academic adversities that put them at a disadvantage, post-secondary education can be a means to improve their economic status.

### **Culture of Care**

Students in poverty who attend college have many obstacles to overcome on their road to graduation. What can we do to support these students in the classroom?

At UAGC, we take pride in our commitment to student success and support. Over the last year, faculty and staff have worked diligently to promote and implement a culture of care that emphasizes compassion, inclusivity, unconditional support, and student success. [Student support](#) comes in many forms at UAGC. Examples include:

- Flexible late policies
- Empathetic support
- Advising services
- Career and Alumni services
- [CHAMPS Peer Mentoring](#)

- Clubs and organizations
- The Office of Access and Wellness
- The Student Advocate HELpline for students in crisis
- Student Support Center (numerous resources, tools, and supports)
- The Hub (library of videos and articles on a range of well-being, academic success, and career development resources)

### **Considerations for the Future**

This discussion is not meant as an exhaustive look into the impact of poverty on higher education but rather a starting point to consider additional obstacles our students may face. There is no simple cure to end poverty, but there are steps that students and faculty can take to lessen the impact. Education is one of those steps.

Knowing that students in poverty are more likely to suffer from mental health issues, chronic illness, basic-needs insecurity, and a deficit in social, cultural, and technical preparedness:

- What shifts in your perceptions about students might need to be adjusted to understand what these students need?
- How does this perception influence how faculty support should manifest for students in higher education?
- What programs or institutional initiatives exist or need to be created to help faculty support these students?

Consider sharing your thoughts on this important topic within your academic community to keep the conversation moving forward. UAGC faculty can find information to support students in [FacultyHelp](#) and on the [Faculty Affairs website](#).

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## PUBLICATION: BECOMING AND SUPPORTING ONLINE ADJUNCT FACULTY IN A GIG ECONOMY

**Jennifer Robinson, Faculty, Academic Engagement Center**



When thinking about the gig economy, side gigs such as TaskRabbit, Uber, and Instacart come to mind. Higher education and the gig economy might not be phrases we string together, but the gig economy has entered higher education through part-time faculty contracts. Adjunct faculty used to be the connection to industry who shared real-world experience by demonstrating how the theories students learn in the classroom are relevant outside the classroom. However, increasingly, and at any given point, in the U.S., about 50% of university faculty are on part-time contracts (New Faculty Majority, n.d.). Being part-time, contract employees make adjunct faculty part of the gig economy (Anderson et al., 2021); IRS, n.d.). The increase of adjunct faculty as part of the gig economy (or the moonlight profession) has unfolded for decades (Inside Scholar, 2018). Adjunct faculty side gigs supplement full-time positions or can be pieced together into a flexible system that leaves the contracted faculty member in charge of their schedule and time. While gig employment used to be niche, many are now used just to make ends meet (McFeely & Pendell, 2018; Nye, 2018). Adjunct faculty face both positives and negatives as gig faculty.

One of the downsides to the adjunct faculty role is the potential necessity of piecing together several gigs to make ends meet. This structure can translate into not being part of the broader community for generating knowledge (Angulo, 2018; Vander et al., 2017). They might also feel isolated and receive less professional development than their full-time counterparts (Xu, 2019). Adjunct faculty may have different access to departmental communications or not have voting rights on committees (Levin & Hernandez, 2012). Finally, adjunct faculty may only receive communications when something is wrong with their teaching practices. While this distance between the adjunct and the broader higher education community can feel challenging, there are some upsides.

Some adjunct faculty prefer the gig over full-time commitment for several reasons. Intentional adjuncts prefer teaching without the demands of research or publishing (Goedde, 2014; Nelson et al., 2020) and can avoid politics and interpersonal conflict. Likewise, they have more flexibility and reap the benefits of

the combined intellectual stimulation of working multiple gigs that leverage their industry knowledge (Goedde, 2014). Whether adjunct faculty are in the gig economy to make ends meet or are members of the intentional adjunct community, there is a need to support these faculty into and through the profession.

In recognition of the continually shifting landscape of higher education and faculty, a team gathered to share their collective wisdom about becoming and supporting adjunct faculty in a gig economy. This 11-chapter volume shares the wisdom of sixteen faculty support professionals and adjunct faculty within and outside UAGC.

**Chapter 1:** Getting Started as an Adjunct Faculty in the Online Classroom, written by Eleanor Froschmayer, a UAGC graduate and an adjunct faculty member, shares ideas for how to get started searching for an adjunct position, generating a resume and strategies for interviewing successfully. She also shares strategies for new adjunct faculty to use when supporting students in an online environment. DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-7776-2.ch001

**Chapter 2:** The Faculty Lounge: Designing a "Local" Space for Online Adjunct Faculty was written by Stefanie Lassitter, an adjunct faculty member at UAGC. Stefanie shares her wisdom of designing a space where adjunct faculty can have a one-stop shop for course-specific resources that provide just-in-time support for all faculty. DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-7776-2.ch002

**Chapter 3:** Supporting Adjunct Faculty through Responsive Professional Development is written by Rebecca Hayes, a faculty support professional at UAGC with a background in instructional design. Rebecca shares successful, responsive professional development approaches to support understanding adult learning theory, instructional best practices, and time management through effective onboarding practices. DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-7776-2.ch003

**Chapter 4:** Contingency and Co-Being: A Dialogic Approach to Adjunct Faculty Support, was written by Teresa Kuruc, Vice President of Faculty Affairs at UAGC. This chapter advocates seeing the adjunct position as a relationship that impacts each other's paradigm to improve the adjunct faculty experience. Teresa shares theory and ideas for creating partnerships to draw adjunct faculty into a learning community. DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-7776-2.ch004

**Chapter 5:** Engaging as an Online Adjunct Faculty: Whose Responsibility is it Anyway? was written by Tanya Mooney, a full-time faculty member with UAGC. Tanya shared ideas for how to bridge the virtual divide that is inherent in an online university. She provides ideas to draw in online adjunct faculty to foster engagement. DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-7776-2.ch005

**Chapter 6:** Caring for Yourself as an Adjunct Faculty Member, was written by Michael Robinson, an adjunct faculty member in the Ph.D. Education program and a full-time member of the UAGC Academic Integrity team. Michael shares practices for attending to well-being while potentially working multiple positions. DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-7776-2.ch006

**Chapter 7:** Maximizing Learner Engagement and Minimizing Transactional Distance with Positive Psychology Interventions was written by Ellen Beattie, a full-time faculty member in the Department of Education and Liberal Arts at UAGC. Ellen shared strategies for using positive psychology to support the

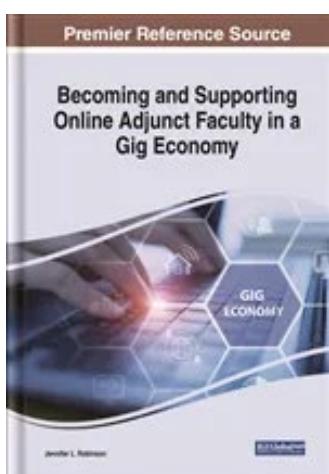
well-being of online college students through purposefully focused, positive psychology interventions that build community. DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-7776-2.ch007

**Chapter 8:** Building Rapport with Students in Short-Term, Solution-Focused Settings was written by Malia Minnick, an adjunct faculty member with UAGC. Malia shares strategies to promote student success by adapting instructor engagement and teaching methods using Schlossberg's theory of mattering and marginality. This theory includes the aspects of attention, importance, ego-extension, dependence, and appreciation. These aspects are demonstrated through pragmatic practices in the online classroom. DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-7776-2.ch008

**Chapter 9:** Connecting Learning Theory to Course Design and Facilitation by Developing a Teaching Philosophy was written by Kate Johnson, Amy Erickson, and Dianna Boggan, all members of the UAGC Faculty Affairs department. This team shares how developing a thorough teaching philosophy can guide teaching practices that provide personal learning environments for students in online settings that can support retention and persistence and act as a tool for self-evaluation. DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-7776-2.ch009

**Chapter 10:** Instructional Media: A Tool for Your Gigs was written by J. Richard Freese, from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Rich shared strategies for creating media to support adjunct faculty's best practices for student support in an online environment. DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-7776-2.ch010

**Chapter 11:** Successful Online Learning Implementation with the Focus on International Adjunct Effectiveness was written by Maja Zelihic (Dean, Forbes School of Business and Technology at UAGC), Sina Patel (Board of Directors at Jonestown Bank & Trust company and adjunct faculty at UAGC), David Ssekamate (Uganda Management Institute), and Cera Emiru Deresa (Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor for Mulungushi University). This final chapter provides a lens into supporting adjunct faculty engaged in e-learning through an international perspective. While most of this book is about the U.S. perspective of supporting adjunct faculty, the international perspective shows how developing countries support their international adjuncts. DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-7776-2.ch011



IGI Global Publishers allows customers to purchase the entire book or individual chapters. If you are interested in a specific chapter (or the entire book), [feel free to review the sample chapter on the publisher's website](#).

Overall, this collection of wisdom will support anyone in faculty development or considering becoming an adjunct faculty member. We hope that volume will be helpful to our colleagues in online higher education.

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## ANNOUNCING THE 2023-2024 UAGC UNIVERSITY FELLOWS PROGRAM RECIPIENTS

The Office of Research & Creative Scholarship and Academic Affairs is pleased to announce the distinguished awardees of the 2023-2024 University Fellows Program (UFP) grants. UAGC full-time

faculty members consistently demonstrate commendable levels of scholarly activity. The UFP provides a significant platform to garner additional support for their invaluable pursuits. It is with a sense of pride that the institution allocates an annual budget of \$100,000 to nurture and advance faculty research and scholarship.

The proposals submitted for this year's UFP were of exceptional quality, reflecting the competitive nature of the selection process. These proposals exemplified the spirit of collaboration among scholars from the University of Arizona Global Campus, encompassing various colleges and programs.

Notably, each proposal submitted this year was required to align with the UAGC Critical Student Goals, demonstrating a firm commitment to our core values and dedication to enriching the academic experience of our students.

Once again, congratulations to the grant winners, and we express our gratitude to all participants who took the time to contribute a research proposal. Through such exceptional dedication to scholarly pursuits, we continuously elevate the standards of academic excellence at UAGC.

<b>Primary Investigator (PI)</b>	<b>Team Member(s)</b>	<b>Title</b>
Hazar Shehadeh, School of General Studies	Jennifer Robinson	Live Learning: Students' Perception and Impact
Holly Lopez, College of Arts and Sciences	Stephanie Heald, Michelle Simecek	ECE Retention Project Phase 2
Holly Ourso, School of General Studies		Live Learning Mathematics Expansion
Jessi Upshaw, College of Arts and Sciences	Jackie Kyger	The Impact of Narrative-Based Professional Development on Student Success and the Development of a Culture of Care   ED Talks: Ideas Worth Exploring
Julie Adkins, College of Arts and Sciences	Jackie Kyger	The Writer's Toolkit: Supporting Academic Writing of Graduate Students

Karen Ivy, Forbes School of Business and Technology®	Tahereh Daneshi	Decoding Artificial Intelligence for Building Self-Efficacy and Leadership Self-Efficacy: Learning From Experts, Examples, and Experience
Matthew Laubacher, School of General Studies	Holly Heatley	Examining the Impact of Weekly Synchronous Online Sessions on Student Satisfaction and Performance in HIS 206
Newton Miller, College of Arts and Sciences		Do affinity groups impact retention rates of men of color?
Newton Miller, College of Arts and Sciences		Leveraging the “Eight to be Great” to Teach Student-Sustained Academic Achievement
Pete Limon, Forbes School of Business and Technology®	Carl Marquez	Investigating the Impact of Corporate Sponsorship on Employment Opportunities for Certified UAGC Cybersecurity Graduates
Sandra Rebeor, College of Arts and Sciences	Michelle Rosser-Majors, Christine McMahon, Stephanie Stubbs	You've got mail! Messages and Live Connections Enriched With Encouragement, Empowerment, And Humor - The Missing Link to Student Retention And Success?
Stephanie Stubbs, College of Arts and Sciences	Michelle Rosser-Majors	Joining the Journey: Supporting Doctoral Student Persistence and Degree Completion Through Purposeful, Motivational Interventions
Teresa Handy, School of General Studies	Harla Frank, Jennifer Dunn, Matthew Galloway, Connie Lower	GEN 101 OER Project
Teresa Handy, School of General Studies		Each One, Reach One

## WELLNESS CORNER

Welcome to the new Wellness Corner! The Wellness Corner will be a dedicated space in the Chronicle where faculty and staff can find resources, tips, and information related to various aspects of wellness, including physical health, mental well-being, work-life balance, and personal development.

This column is but one initiative of the Faculty Council's, Faculty Wellness Subcommittee, a group of faculty members who are passionate about wellness and will be working with the administration, staff, and external experts to develop programs and activities that address our faculty's specific needs and interests and enhance the overall well-being of our faculty community. While the subcommittee will play a significant role in curating content for the Wellness Corner initially, others are welcome to share their expertise or personal experiences. This column is intended to be a platform for diverse perspectives on wellness within our community. Please get in touch with Faculty Council co-chairs Dr. Cara Metz and Dr. Yvonne Lozano if you have questions or suggestions or want to contribute to the Wellness Corner or another wellness initiative.

### CONNECT WITH YOUR HIGHEST SELF: FINDING YOUR AWE.

**Yvonne Lozano, Faculty Council Co-Chair & Assistant Dean, Department of Health Sciences**



Over the summer, I read an excellent book by Dr. Dacher Keltner: *Awe: The New Science of Everyday Wonder and How It Can Transform Your Life*. Keltner is a renowned psychologist, author, and professor at the University of California, Berkeley. He is widely recognized for his expertise in positive psychology and his research on emotions, social interactions, and well-being. In his book *Awe*, Keltner draws from scientific studies, personal anecdotes, and historical examples to demonstrate the profound impact that experiences of awe can have on our lives. He explains the psychological mechanisms behind awe and provides actionable strategies for cultivating more moments of wonder in our everyday lives. Keltner's ability to connect scientific research with practical applications makes his perspective on awe particularly compelling.

Keltner identifies awe as "the feeling of being in the presence of something vast that transcends your current understanding of the world" (2023, p. 23). He notes that experiencing awe can profoundly impact our well-being and happiness. Research has shown that moments of awe can elevate our mood, decrease stress, and increase overall life satisfaction. It doesn't always have to be a grand, life-changing event. Even small moments that challenge our perspective or make us feel wonder can evoke awe. For example, witnessing an act of kindness or appreciating the beauty of nature can trigger feelings of awe (Keltner, 2023). Awe often leads to positive emotions—including awe itself—that can counteract negative emotions and improve our overall emotional well-being.

Awe can also shift our focus away from ourselves and toward something greater (Keltner, 2023). This broader perspective can give us a sense of purpose and meaning, enhancing our overall life satisfaction. Additionally, awe-inducing experiences can improve our feelings of social connection and empathy toward others, leading to increased prosocial behavior (Keltner, 2023). Seeking out moments of awe and actively engaging with the world around us, even in small ways, can have a big impact on our wellness and the wellness of others.

I have curated a list of commonly recommended suggestions to discover awe in your life. Please try the following:

1. Be present: Practice mindfulness and strive to be fully present in the moment. Slow down, observe your surroundings, and engage all your senses. By being fully present, you can increase your chances of experiencing awe-inspiring moments.
2. Connect with nature: Spend time in nature and immerse yourself in its beauty. Nature often evokes awe. Walking in the park, hiking in the mountains, or sitting under a tree can help you feel connected to something greater than yourself.
3. Seek novelty: Engage in new experiences, explore unfamiliar places, or try activities outside your comfort zone. Novelty can spark a sense of wonder and awe as you encounter new and unexpected things.
4. Cultivate gratitude: Regularly practice gratitude by acknowledging and appreciating the positive aspects of your life. This can help shift your perspective and open your eyes to the awe-inspiring moments that often go unnoticed.
5. Engage in creative activities: Pursue creative outlets such as art, music, writing, or photography. Creative expressions can awaken your sense of awe and provide a channel for experiencing and sharing it with others.
6. Cultivate curiosity: Approach life with curiosity and wonder. Ask questions, explore diverse perspectives, and embrace the unknown. Curiosity can lead to awe-inspiring discoveries and a deeper appreciation of the world around you.

Remember, awe is a profoundly personal experience, and what inspires awe may vary from person to person. Be open to different possibilities and be fully present in moments that elicit awe and wonder.

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*Stay tuned for more information and perspectives on wellness in upcoming issues of the UAGC Chronicle, including ways to connect wellness to teaching practice and personal life. By sharing and inviting others to contribute their insights and stories in this column, we hope to foster a sense of shared learning and support among all faculty members as we navigate our journeys toward holistic well-being. Again, feel free to contact [Dr. Cara Metz](#) or [Dr. Yvonne Lozano](#).*

*“In awe, we understand we are part of many things that are much larger than the self.”*

*- Dacher Keltner (2023, p. 7)*

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## COZY UP, NOT SNUGGLE DOWN

**Dana Hill, Faculty, Department of Health Sciences**



Fall is a beautiful time of year and a precursor to cozy winter days and nights. There are things we can do to prepare ourselves for cozying up and not having to snuggle down because we are sick. Some wellness tips and tricks are right at your fingertips and can make all the difference in how you fair the seasons. Nutrition, hydration, exercise, and prevention of the flu, colds, and other viruses should be top

considerations as we enter the cooler months.

**Nutrition:** In the summer, we are blessed with the beautiful fresh vegetables and fruits produced in the growing season. As the growing season wanes for some of our favorites, we can look to the new seasonal produce. Stews and soups are a favorite for cooler nights, and some vegetables grown late in the year are perfect for these delectable dishes. Think colorful root vegetables and protein-enriched broth. Sweet potatoes (all varieties: orange, purple, Japanese, for instance), beets (golden and red, for example), turnips, rutabagas, and carrots are all excellent sources of vitamins and minerals and are wonderful roasted with a bit of olive oil or diced up in a rich and hearty soup or stew (Cleveland Health, 2023).

**Hydration:** We drink more water on hotter days and then forget to drink enough during cooler times when we do not perspire as much. Yet, we still need several glasses of water daily to keep our bodies functioning properly (University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2023). We lose water through our respiratory tracks, and our living and working spaces often have dry heat, taking even more moisture from the air and our bodies. Drink more water by setting reminders. Set an alarm to go off on your phone, watch, or computer to take a few drinks every now and then. Mark a large bottle of water with goals to reach throughout the day. You can flavor it with non-caloric drops or a few fruit slices. Reward yourself for drinking your water goal!

**Exercise:** It is easier to stay busy and do things outdoors when the weather is warmer. With the cooldown of fall, take some time to go for a walk and enjoy the scenery. If the weather gets too cold, use a treadmill, go to a gym, or try something new. Wall Pilates? Body Weight routine? Hyperbolic stretching? Yoga? Chair yoga? Why not give them a try! You can find a lot of great exercise routines on YouTube for free, or for a nominal fee, you can have a program designed just for you. Moving is important throughout the year, especially when winter brings on shorter and more sedentary days

(National Library of Medicine,[NIH],n.d.). Benefits include helping yourself to stay well, improving mobility, and looking good in your swimsuit when Spring and Summer come around!

**Rest:** Rest is just as important as activity, maybe even more so. Fall and winter months are busy times with holidays, work, school, and gatherings with family and friends. Plan your rest. Yes, PLAN your rest. It is okay to say “no” and take time for yourself. Seek out activities that help you relax (University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2023), and consider an earlier bedtime now and then. Fall and winter are good times to refocus mentally and physically and find time to rejuvenate. Do so with mindfulness!

**Preventing the flu, colds, and viruses:** The flu season is most rampant from December through February. Colds and other viruses, including COVID-19, can impact people anytime. However, cases escalate when people congregate indoors, and, of course, winter is when we congregate indoors the most! We are closed due to the colder temperatures, and many holiday gatherings occur in the Fall and Winter months. So, what should you do to stay healthy? First and foremost, wash your hands! Second, if you are sick or do not feel well, stay home – away from others! Those two things alone will help to prevent the transmission of most flu, colds, respiratory, and other viruses. If you must be in a crowded place and are not feeling well, wear a mask and keep your distance as much as possible from others. Get our seasonal flu shot (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021; NIH, n.d), and, finally, do everything mentioned above: eat wholesome foods, drink plenty of water, exercise, and get plenty of rest. There may not be anything outlandishly new in what you have just read, but perhaps you gained a new thought or idea about how to stay healthy and maybe even make some healthy habits when the Earth seems to be a bit quieter. Try something new! You may find that you really like that new “thing,” setting yourself up for healthier outcomes in the future.

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## EVENTS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEWS

### CULTURE OF CARE SUMMIT – CALL FOR PROPOSALS

[Submit your proposal here.](#)

Please consider proposing a presentation, workshop, and/or panel participation in line with the [Call for Proposal guidance](#). The deadline to submit a proposal is **January 8, 2024**. Summit organizers hope for diverse perspectives and presenters from varying expertise and experience.



Mark your calendar to attend! **March 27 – 28, 2024**

### TLC 2023 RECAP



TLC 2023 was a remarkable three days full of discourse, research, collaboration, and community building- all focused on ensuring students' academic experience includes the "Yes" that open access in higher education equates to. That means yes to flexibility, affordable resources, and experiential learning and professionalization opportunities. Yes, to understanding the student's lived experience and answering the call to serve and fulfill the obligations and responsibilities incumbent upon us to further open access to higher education to a diverse, contemporary post-secondary student body.

This year, TLC welcomed over 700 attendees from several countries, all 50 states, in many fields, including K-12 organizations, healthcare and financial organizations, and attendees from more than 35 colleges and universities. For the first time, TLC featured UAGC Doctoral graduate research, and we look forward to welcoming more doctoral graduate research presentations in the future.

At the beginning of our conference, we co-constructed these learning outcomes to enhance our learning experience.

### TLC 2023 Conference Learning Outcomes

- Analyze systems of student support to determine the effectiveness of interventions.
- Identify barriers in education to remove them.
- Analyze how what I learn can be implemented in teaching and leadership.
- Identify strategies to use in our work to support open access and student success for all diverse learners.
- Apply the concepts of Culture of Care to open-access Learners.

Based on the poll results offered in our conference closing session, over 60% of our attendees indicated they felt they had achieved these learning outcomes through their attendance and engagement in TLC sessions.

The execution of TLC requires year-round planning. The individuals you see listed here dedicated an incredible amount of their time and expertise to planning, solving problems, communicating, mentoring, and more.

### Teaching and Learning Conference Planning Committee

Haley Sampson, Associate Director of Faculty Engagement	Dr. Tanya Mooney, UAGC Assistant Professor
Jacquelyn Bullis, Faculty Support and Classroom Consultant	Dr. Jennifer Robinson, Program Chair, Associate Professor
Mallory DeMay, Faculty Support and Classroom Consultant	Dr. Hazar Shehadeh, UAGC Associate Professor
Ryan Thomas, Faculty Support and Classroom Consultant	Dr. Teresa Kuruc, Vice President, Faculty Affairs

We gratefully recognize the following TLC session and tech hosts, proposal reviewers, and additional TLC supporters for their work. It takes the contribution of more than 70 individuals to support this conference.

Stephanie Adams	Teresa Handy	Karin Mente	Robert Smiles
Bryan Aylward	Brandy Havens	Nicole Methven	Kaitlyn Sproat
Mapi Baez	Kira Heske	Cara Metz	Sara Sutler-Cohen
Romona Banks	Gail Hoskyns-Long	Newton Miller	Deb Swanson
Roseanne Bensley	Kingsley Jackson	Charlie Minnick	LaVonda Taylor
Clifford Blizard	Crissie Jameson	Lynda Moreno	Ryan Thomas
Diana Boggan	Kate Johnson	Rachel Orlansky	Dan Tinianow
Darla Branda	Morgan Johnson	Michelle Otstot	Lynne Trevisan
Shawna Brown	Stephani Kilby	Rebecca Paynter	Stephanie Tweedie
Bonita Bryant	Kerissa Kuis	Agnes Pearcy	Jessi Upshaw
Kim Cowan	Teresa Kuruc	Matthew Phillips	Conni Whitten
Sally Deckard	Erick Lear	Betty Reichart	Amanda Williams
Andre Dodson	Holly Lopez	Allison Rief	Kelly Wood
Gigi Dorsett	Connie Lower	Emily Robles	Herminder Wray
Nicole Egelhofer-Wells	Hwangji Lu	Avisha Sadeghinejad	UAGC Marketing Team
Amy Erickson	Jamette Magwood-Gilston	Paul Schultz	
Laura Fial	April Matteson	Shari Schwartz	
Tamecca Fitzpatrick	Cole McFarren	Kathryn Sellers	

Each year, TLC features several conference awards based on attendee nominations and engagement with the conference.

#### **TLC Community Award**



The TLC Community Award recognizes an individual who demonstrated the highest level of engagement via the event platform through their interaction in the icebreaker activities, responding to polls, participating in and creating discussion forums, and posting photos. This active engagement creates a more enriching and fun experience for many attendees.

The TLC 2023 Community Award recognizes [Nicole Egelhofer-Wells](#), UAGC Faculty Support and Classroom Consultant. Thank you, Nicole, for your engagement at your first but not last UAGC Teaching and Learning conference.

#### **TLC Vanguard Award**



The 2023 TLC Vanguard recognizes the session that most effectively embraced the conference theme through theoretical inquiry or practical application. The **TLC 2023 Vanguard Award** goes to Dr. Clifford Blizzard and his panelists for their panel titled: **Meeting the Needs of Open Access Online University Students Who Were Formerly Justice Involved / Formerly Incarcerated.**



Honorable mention goes to Dr. Sasha Knox for her session titled **Supporting Scholar Mothers: (re)Engaging Motherhood: a Qualitative Study on Single Mothers of Color in Post-Secondary Education.**



#### **TLC Teach Us More Award**

The TLC Teach Us More award recognizes several sessions TLC attendees would like to learn more about via article-length pieces for broader transmission. The UAGC Chronicle will work with these contributors to disseminate their articles to the UAGC community. The Teach Us More award goes to the three sessions listed here.

- **Artificial Intelligence Workshop: Crafting Inclusive Learning Experiences – A Hands-On Journey** presented by Dr. Allison Rief, Department Chair, UAGC School of General Studies, Sean Nufer, Senior Director of Teaching and Learning at The Community Solution Education System, and Laura Blom, Faculty Training Specialist, The Community Solution Education System
- **Meeting the Needs of Open Access Online University Students Who Were Formerly Justice Involved / Formerly Incarcerated** presented by Dr. Clifford Blizzard, Honors Program Chair and Scientific Competency Chair, UAGC, School of General Studies, Dr. Teresa Leary Handy, Dr. Jennifer Robinson, Program Chair, The University of Arizona Global Campus, Mathew Galloway, Student Care Manager, The University of Arizona Global Campus and Rebecca Davis, Career Services Manager, The University of Arizona Global Campus
- **Supporting Scholar Mothers: (re)Engaging Motherhood: a Qualitative Study on Single Mothers of Color in Post Secondary Education** presented by Dr. Sasha Knox, Associate Dean of Career Education, San Diego City College; Associate Faculty, The University of Arizona Global Campus; SKNOX Consulting

#### **TLC Most Engaging Session**



The 2023 TLC Most Engaging Session award recognizes the session that showed the most asynchronous activity in related discussion boards, meetups, polls, and other engagement activities. This year, the award goes to **The Virtual Learning Community Model Pilot: An Equity-Driven Approach to Open-Access Success** panel chaired by Dr. Yvonne Lozano and panelists Dr. Barb Zorn, Christy McMahon, and William Ballard. This session discussed the Virtual Learning Community (VLC) Model, an equity-focused model tailored for an open-access university, and centers on five wellness factors associated with low retention, including financial, physical, psychological, spiritual, and metacognitive wellness.

**Mark your calendar!**  
**The University of Arizona Global Campus 2024**  
**Teaching and Learning Conference**

**10 YEARS OF TLC!**

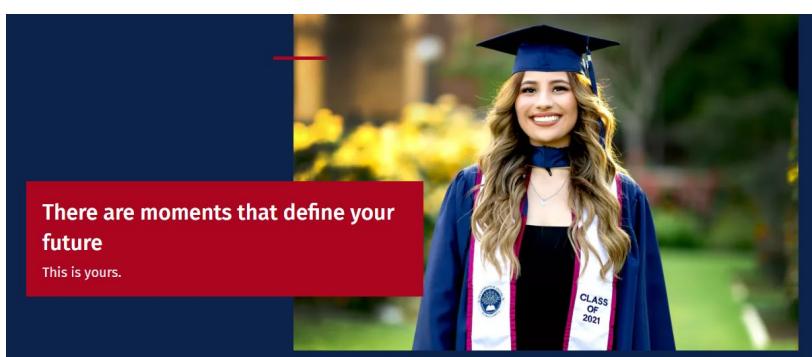
**November 5-7, 2024**

## FALL 2023 COMMENCEMENT



Each year, UAGC awards degrees at two commencement ceremonies. As in years past, the fall commencement ceremony occurred virtually. Virtual commencement is a unique and innovative approach to ensuring UAGC graduates have the opportunity to attend, engage, and celebrate their academic accomplishments with their family, friends, and support community. The fall 2023 commencement was held on October 21 and recognized over 7,000 students. For the first time, the ceremony included a bi-lingual component from Mauri Garcia, UAGC alumna, and the University of Arizona land acknowledgment, which further acknowledges the diverse experiences of the UAGC student body.

We invite you to watch the fall 2023 commencement linked above to hear more from Omar Vasquez, keynote speaker and UAGC Board of Directors member, who challenged students to identify their passion, take risks, and find the courage to be honest. President Robert Robbins and Paul Pastorek, UAGC Senior Vice President, also shared their words of gratitude to the family, friends, and support systems that help UAGC graduates complete their degrees and welcomed graduates as Wildcats!



Excited to learn more about future UAGC Commencement ceremonies? [Visit the UAGC Graduation Information site.](#)

## BUILDING ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

### THE HIGH VALUE OF A FOUNDATION IN THE HUMANITIES: PART II—A BRIEF PORTRAIT OF ENG225: INTRODUCTION TO FILM

James Meetze, Faculty, Academic Engagement Center



There is a common but false narrative in popular culture that the study of the Humanities is no longer relevant, won't lead to a serious career, and is a waste of time and resources. Here at UAGC, sixth in our GenEd pathway, ENG225: Introduction to Film reveals that this false narrative couldn't be further from the truth. I note here that I am one of the co-authors of the textbook *Film: From Watching to Seeing* and the developer of the current iteration of this course. I have taught ENG225 for the past 12 years. The number of times I've explained to students why they are taking a course in film analysis is so great that I eventually built the answer into the curriculum and now ask students to reflect on the real-world applications of the skills they've acquired. Dominant narratives, however, can be stubborn, and I still field this question at least once every five weeks. Students want to know what purpose each element of their education serves. Any student's initial resistance to a course in film analysis is most likely a response to these dominant narratives that studying the Humanities is irrelevant to a career in the highly touted fields outside the Humanities, especially those associated with STEM and business. That's the problem with narratives; when they take on a life of their own, they shape collective perception. Whatever our students' intended field of study or eventual career, they need to be trained to think creatively, engage their imagination, organize thoughts, analyze their modes of delivery, their content, and their intent, and be able to articulate their own ideas about the validity of those ideas as it pertains to their individual trajectories. ENG225 fosters these skills through the lens of film analysis while training students to hone their writing skills. *Why am I taking a film class*, a student asks yet again. The answer is in the course description:

This course is designed to expand students' appreciation of film and knowledge of how films are made. Through analysis of storytelling in a visual medium, students will examine the ways in which movies are shot, develop characters, evoke emotion, depict physical reality, reflect society, and have the power to influence it. Though the focus of the course is film itself, students will gain deeper intercultural fluency while growing their skills in critical thinking, written communication, and visual analysis.

Not only does film analysis offer us greater enjoyment of film and media, but it expands our ability to see narratives as the very core of our society, to analyze intention, and to develop greater empathy for diverse perspectives. Beyond the aesthetic awareness competency this course satisfies, it prepares students to reflect on what stories resonate with them, why they resonate, and how specific

techniques—used across visual media—amplify those resonant messages. Furthermore, as students cultivate the process of self-reflection from the outset of the course, beginning in their first post and closing the loop in their last post, they become more aware of their own thinking and how that awareness serves to empower them as *thinkers*. As Cathy Davidson argues in her book, *The New Education: How to Revolutionize the University to Prepare Students for a World in Flux* (2017):

Students need new ways of integrating knowledge, including through reflection on why and what they are learning. . . . They need to be offered challenges that promote their success after graduation, when all the educational testing has stopped. This is an engaged form of student-centered pedagogy known as “active learning.” Students are encouraged to create new knowledge from the information around them and use it to make a public, professional, or experiential contribution that has impact beyond the classroom. Students don’t just master what an expert sets out for them but, rather, learn how to become experts themselves. It’s a survival skill for the journey that is their lives. (p. 8)

ENG225 includes two high-impact practices that promote active learning: Student Voice/Choice and Live Learning. This course begins by asking students to reflect on their previous courses and look ahead to their courses to come, incorporating the [General Education Pathway at UAGC Interactive Classroom Map](#) as a visual guide. Students are then asked to think about how impactful films can strike a cultural nerve by speaking to a pressing social concern or telling us something about ourselves, our history, and our contemporary moment and to discuss specific instances when this impact has been true for them. Here, in an exercise in active learning, students apply metacognition to their own experiences and perceptions of film’s larger social impact; they evaluate how they think about something that is personally meaningful to them and why it is so. In this and subsequent exercises, students bring films that are important to them into the discussion, thereby participating in their own learning. This demonstrates active learning with *Student Voice*, which is “the expression and reflection of students’ thoughts, ideas, opinions, and values that they share to drive change within a school community” (Fontein, May 23, 2022). Because students are developing analysis around something that has meaning to them and participating in the discussion, they, by necessity, encounter multiple points of view, which, in turn, further shape the ongoing discussion and learning as the course progresses. When, in their final discussions, students are asked to reflect on both their expanded view of films’ social resonance and their own metacognitive, analytical, and communication development throughout the course, that’s when the magic happens, and students articulate both their surprise at how valuable the course is and how easily that false narrative about the Humanities begins to crumble.

Making that personal connection to a cultural artifact such as a film and breaking apart how that artifact makes meaning has an educational effect that is multiple: it fosters empathy for others, listening to alternative perspectives, gives insight into others’ values and points of view, develops critical thinking, and invites connections to be made across complex ideas. When these skills are directly or indirectly engaged, when students are given the opportunity to participate in their own education and see it reflected in their growth as people, as students, and as professionals, they learn how to learn, which

makes them satisfied and confident. One of my recent students, in their Week 5 reflection on the skills acquired in studying film, put it thusly:

The ability to break things down and understand how each piece works together to create meaning was a game-changer for me. It changed how I look at everything that has some kind of story or intention behind it. Secondly, I have greatly developed my writing. I know it might seem somewhat unrelated to analyzing film, but this is a huge piece for me. I write almost every single day (not in any special format) at work. Taking the time to thoughtfully structure sentences and paragraphs has made my writing sound much better than it previously did and made my professional communication that much more effective. (Anonymous, n.d.)

A foundation in the Humanities, in courses like ENG225: Introduction to Film, positions our students for academic success, fosters student persistence and retention, and prepares our students with the tools necessary to address the world ever in flux, the unknown that we can be sure, one way or another, is on the horizon. There is no longer any one-size-fits-all pathway to success. On any hero's journey, there is a maze along the way, and today's students—our students, heroes all—need to be able to read the signs which are more nebulous than ever before and master their own destinies—many of which will look, unlike anything we've yet seen or imagined. Or, scratch that, will look like things we've only seen in movies.

## **GIVING BIRTH TO UNDERSTANDING: HOW THE SOCRATIC METHOD RELATES TO TEACHING CRITICAL THINKING**

**Christopher Foster, Program Chair, Academic Engagement Center**



Socrates made two famous but apparently contradictory claims: One is that he was wisest in that he alone admitted to knowing nothing (Plato, n.d.-a). This suggests that we all know nothing, and one is wiser to acknowledge that fact.

The other claim is that the teacher is but a midwife, helping students give birth to truth (Plato, n.d.-b). This perspective suggests that we are all full of truth, waiting to be birthed. This truth inside us is a kind of knowledge that the skilled teacher can help us realize and articulate. So, which is it ... do we really know nothing, or are we full of truth?

In this article, I hope to discuss how reconciling these competing ideas can help us think about teaching critical thinking by encouraging students to think about their own thinking and to enjoy using it to discover.

Socrates seeks to reconcile our contradiction in the *Theaetetus*, where he discusses his method of teaching:

... the triumph of my art is in thoroughly examining whether the thought which the mind of the young man brings forth is a false idol or a noble and true birth. ... The god compels me to be a midwife but does not allow me to bring forth. And therefore, I am not myself at all wise, nor have I anything to show which is the invention or birth of my own soul, but those who converse with me profit ... they all make astonishing progress; and this in the opinion of others as well as in their own. It is quite dear that they never learned anything from me; the many fine discoveries to which they cling are of their own making (Plato, n.d.-b).

Despite his claim to the contrary, Socrates himself, of course, birthed many profound truths during his conversations with others. However, as a teacher, his job was merely to ask questions to help people discover on their own. Only then was their offspring (understanding) truly their *own*. Only then did they have the desire to love and nurture it and to develop the tools to discover more.

In the famous adage, teaching someone *what* to think is the analog of giving them a fish. Teaching them *how* to think is analogous to teaching them *how* to fish. When we teach critical thinking, we also teach *how to think about improving one's fishing skills* (and to love the process).

Critical thinking has been defined as “Thinking about thinking with the aim of improving one’s thinking” ([Murawski, 2014](#)). UAGC’s own ILO for critical thinking reads, “Apply logic and critical thinking to evaluate reasoning, explore diverse perspectives, and engage in metacognition.” Both define critical thinking in a self-referential way. There is good reason for this.

There is a very meta-aspect of teaching critical thinking. You cannot merely teach someone to think since they have to have the ability to *think* to learn in the first place. Philosophers have argued that one must (somewhat ironically) already have the ability to reason to learn how to reason ([Foster, 2008](#)).

This reminds me of the quotation from Einstein: “I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn” ([Einstein, 2023](#)). Our job is to provide the context for students to tap into their own faculties of discovery so that they love the truths they discover and help them grow and develop the tools to access more and more truth throughout their lives. We give them not the ability to think but the courage to question, the confidence to reason, the curiosity to discover, and the ever-present desire to learn.

It is always humbling to read introductions from students who already have jobs involving incredible amounts of impressive critical thought. I remind myself that I am not here to *teach them to think*; I am here to guide them to reflect on their own thinking so that they can further improve their thinking. This process creates not a vicious circle but a recursive spiral of self-improvement.

What does this look like in the online classroom? When we ask follow-up questions in discussion forums, for example, we don’t just ask about what they *know*; we ask about what the *principles and reasons* they used to arrive at their conclusions. We want them to investigate reasoning itself.

To live up to the theme of this article, it seems apropos to go meta and seek to embody the Socratic method itself. So, I shall close, not by giving you a list of ways to use the Socratic method in the online classroom but by asking you a question and encouraging you to fill in your own answer:

What questions can you ask that inspire your students to dig deep, reason carefully, think about their own thinking, and yearn to discover more?

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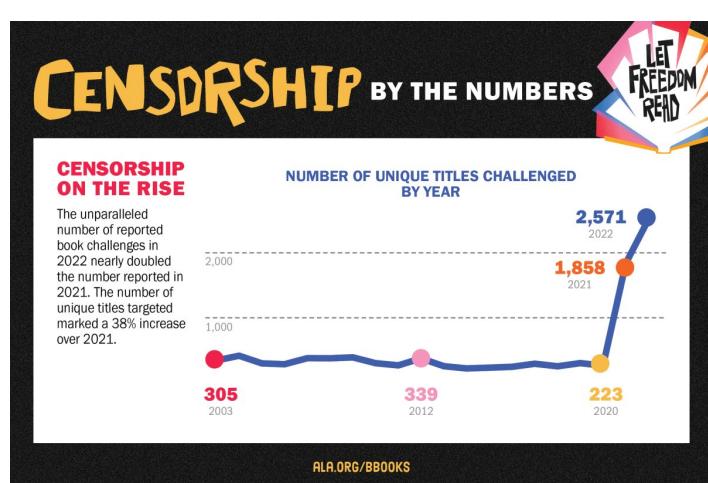
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## LET FREEDOM READ: UAGC CELEBRATES BANNED BOOKS WEEK 2023

**Karin Mente, MLIS, Outreach Librarian, Academic Experience**



The American Library Association (ALA) honors banned and challenged books each year in October with Banned Books Week. The ALA hosts a series of online events (this year with beloved public defender of literacy, LeVar Burton, former host of PBS Kids' show *Reading Rainbow*). They encourage libraries and schools to host banned book events. And they challenge individuals to undertake possibly the simplest act of defiance: pick up a banned book and read it. This year, the UAGC Library and Academic Integrity teams co-hosted a faculty symposium for the purpose of exploring thoughts on the impacts of banned books and informing our UAGC community on the current state of book bans and challenges.



Note. From American Libraries Association, (2023). Censorship by the numbers. <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks/by-the-numbers>

#### Why Should UAGC Care About Banned Books?

Banning books is censorship, and this censorship is on the rise (ALA, 2023). Challenging or banning books mostly happens in public school classrooms and most frequently targets authors that are female, people of color, and/or LGBTQ+ individuals. A quick look at the [Top 13 Most Challenged Books of 2022](#) list will confirm that most targeted books feature LGBTQ+ characters and/or characters of color or tackle race or racism as topics.

The students of these public school classrooms will eventually find their way into college classrooms, which means some will become our very own students. Many of our UAGC faculty and staff have children or grandchildren in public school classrooms right now. Therefore, this censorship is affecting or will affect many of us. But how?

Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop, credited as the “mother of multicultural children’s literature,” famously used a metaphor of books acting as both a mirror and window for children – a mirror, allowing children to self-affirm when they see themselves reflected back to them in the stories they read, and a window, showing them a view of a world different from their own. Children and young adults in areas of high book bannings are being denied the chance to see themselves and their families reflected back to them in books or get a glimpse of how life might be for their neighbors or classmates. When children see themselves in books and learn about diversity through books, it generates pride, empathy, and acceptance, not to mention skills like literacy, historical understanding, and critical thinking (Pen America, 2023). I feel confident that these are all important qualities that we want our UAGC students and our children or grandchildren to have.

### A UAGC Faculty Symposium to Celebrate Banned Books Week 2023

The potential impacts of banned books in our public school classrooms was a key question we put forward at our **Let Freedom Read: A UAGC Faculty Symposium to Celebrate Banned Books Week** event back in October. This event included readings from UAGC staff members Michael Robinson, who read from John Green’s *Looking for Alaska*, and Alaina Pascarella, who read from Isabelle Allende’s *The House of the Spirits*, followed by small group discussions on the impacts of book bans. The attendees had so many excellent points to share that this publication could never do them justice, but a few points that stuck with me were very simple. First, since so many of us are parents and grandparents, many in attendance stated they see these books under attack in our children’s libraries and curriculum. Some attendees voiced their feelings that our children are under threat of [not seeing stories that represent their history, identities, and experiences at their Scholastic Book Fair](#), for instance, (Yorio, 2023).



Note. From American Libraries Association, (2023). Top 13 most challenged books of 2022.

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/bbooks/frequentlychallengedbooks/top10>

Another solid refrain we heard at the symposium was the argument that you can't teach children to love books if you're restricting the books they could fall in love with. Primary school is where students ideally would foster a burgeoning love of reading to last them their whole lives. Without providing a collection of books that speak to the diverse interests and experiences of the children they serve, many children will not have the chance to make that essential connection with literacy, especially if they happen to be a child who is already less interested in reading. Secondary school is where students can begin to build and flex their critical thinking skills, and so much of that happens by reading works that deal with complex topics such as sex, racism, violence, drug use, grief, and death. Thinking critically about these topics and discussing them in their own writing or with classmates, teachers, and parents is how they achieve a sense of who they are in the world and how they will think critically about the events in their lives.

Attendees also shared the following concern: Imagine for a moment that you are a young adult who, maybe for the first time, found a book with a character you could actually identify with. Maybe for the first time ever for a school assignment, you had the chance to write about a book or character that actually spoke to you -- a character that kindled something inside you and made you feel a passion for literature that you've never experienced before because before, all you read were other people's stories that didn't have anything to do with you. And then imagine that a group of parents are flooding your school's board meetings, calling that book you love "harmful" or worse, and vowing to get it removed so it won't be a danger to anyone. How does a young adult not internalize that? How do they walk away from that experience with anything remotely like a love of literacy and lifelong learning? How do they walk away with anything but a message that it's not the book that's "wrong" or "harmful" but rather something about *them* that these groups are afraid of?

In a few short years, the students of today who are seeing books disappearing from their school shelves will be college students, possibly still looking for a place where they feel a sense of belonging, where their identities, experiences, and stories can be reflected back at them, as well as provide a window for others to foster understanding and inclusion.

UAGC would be lucky to have them.

The prevailing sentiment at our UAGC Faculty Symposium was that we need more conversations around censorship and intellectual freedom to be happening – with our colleagues, schools, neighbors, and families. Since our event, we have had several faculty reach out to us, excited to support future programming that centers on marginalized authors and their stories. If you're reading this, I encourage you to think about how you can stand up to book bans and challenges – stock your neighborhood little free library with some banned titles, host a book club that features recently challenged books, or reach out to us at [library@uagc.edu](mailto:library@uagc.edu) if you'd like to be involved with our future programming.

## References

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Yorio, K. (2023). Scholastic apologizes, will discontinue optional set of diverse titles at book fairs. School Library Journal. <https://www.slj.com/story/Scholastic-Apologizes-Will-Discontinue-Optional-Set-of-Diverse-Titles-at-Book-Fairs>

## UAGC FACULTY AFFAIRS AWARDED ADEIL EXCELLENCE IN SUPPORT SERVICE AWARD

The UAGC Faculty Affairs department has been awarded the [Excellence in Support Service Award](#) by the Association for Distance Education and Independent Learning for its pivotal role



in operationalizing a path for UAGC associate (adjunct) faculty to continuously define an instructional Culture of Care. This award recognizes the outstanding efforts of individuals who contributed to supporting distance education/independent learning via courses, recruitment, orientation, etc., with possible implications for other institutions. It is a testament to the UAGC Faculty Affairs department's mission of maintaining One UAGC Faculty, wherein all faculty – both full-time and associate – are equally knowledgeable about and capable of contributing to the [four UAGC critical student success goals](#).

In 2020 and 2021, institutional research conducted by members of Faculty Affairs and the full-time faculty body asserted that specific classroom practices, including proactively communicated flexibility on student assignment deadlines and resubmission policies, could mitigate the negative impact that life experiences outside the college environment have on UAGC students by assuring them that a challenging lived experience need not be a definitive roadblock to their academic progress. While this research provided useful rationales and theoretical models for establishing a caring instructional culture,



UAGC acknowledged that the diversity of its student and faculty populations and its fully online learning environment necessitated a pilot program that would help the institution understand how caring instruction looks in practice in the UAGC context. During this pilot, the UAGC Faculty Affairs department facilitated monthly focus groups in which pilot associate faculty engaged in a community of practice with their peers and colleagues in Academic Affairs and Student Affairs to share successes and challenges and offer feedback to shape institutional policies, classroom technologies, and faculty learning opportunities that would support the institution-wide operationalization of the instructional Culture of Care. More than 100 faculty members, on average, attended synchronous Culture of Care focus group meetings, and around 300 faculty members joined the asynchronous Microsoft Teams discussion.

In preparation for full institutional implementation of the Culture of Care, the UAGC Faculty Affairs department initiated a workgroup of faculty representatives from each academic department to review feedback from Culture of Care pilot faculty and focus group discussions and to define – based on their recommendations – refreshed faculty teaching expectations that embody a culture of caring instruction. The workgroup informed several institutional actions to ensure the operationalization of the Culture of Care among all faculty (e.g., making classroom and policy enhancements that create transparency among faculty, students, and advisors). Also, the department has helped ensure that associate faculty contribute to the definition of Culture of Care by facilitating structured and collaborative research, piloting, decision-making, and professional development opportunities.

For example, UAGC Faculty Affairs:

1. Partnered with a faculty workgroup to develop and launch an [all-faculty development course](#) that offers a deeper look at the unique UAGC student body and explains the nature of their non-college life experiences, the refreshed teaching expectations and examples of how to employ them, and the updated classroom tools that help faculty track their caring instruction efforts.
2. Hosts a monthly all-faculty Community of Practice session, which features a full-time or associate faculty member or a member of Academic or Student Affairs to lead discussion on a specific instructional practice.
3. Facilitates faculty self-reflection activity, defined through a collaboration among full-time and associate faculty and the Faculty Affairs department.
4. Chaired the Culture of Care-focused [2022 UAGC Teaching and Learning Conference](#), where all faculty share and discuss their research and teaching practices.

The Culture of Care is one part of a package of student success initiatives that have contributed to the incremental but measurable improvement of UAGC monthly student cohort retention, which was a factor in the [WSCUC decision to remove the formal notice of concern from UAGC](#).

As any culture does, the UAGC instructional Culture of Care will continue to evolve. The engagement and development structure Faculty Affairs has established aims to place associate faculty at the helm of that evolution. All UAGC faculty and staff are invited and encouraged to engage in current professional development opportunities designed to support the continued involvement and impact on institutional initiatives. These opportunities include:

## Leveraging a Philosophy of Teaching

Available in Workday, this course posits that creating a teaching philosophy can support a connection between field expertise and curriculum design and deployment because it requires 1) critical reflection on one's beliefs about how learning happens and 2) an articulation of how the theories and practical applications that shape those beliefs drive an educator-practitioner's approach to facilitating a specific course. The course introduces fundamental concepts of learning theory and curriculum development and discusses their connection to course facilitation.

## Course Feedback

Formative feedback and self-reflection offer valuable opportunities for us to turn our experiences into learning and growth. Faculty Affairs is eager to discuss your teaching experiences – especially those related to instructive feedback practices – via the Course Feedback process to facilitate these learning opportunities. [Learn more here](#).

## UAGC Community of Practice

[Register to attend](#). The community of practice, which is scheduled twice a month, is a network for faculty and staff to share knowledge and learn from one another. Please join us to engage in a discussion of the learning offered in the abovementioned Leveraging a Philosophy of Teaching course.

## Monthly Faculty Support Office Hours

[Register to attend](#). UAGC Faculty continue to express their desire to connect with fellow colleagues. These monthly office hours intend to provide that connection through a collaborative discussion of practical applications of the [Culture of Care pillars](#) in the classroom and beyond.

## UAGC FACULTY COUNCIL AND ITS PURPOSE

**Yvonne Lozano, Department of Health Sciences, Assistant Dean, UAGC Faculty Council Co-Chair**



The University Faculty Council at the University of Arizona Global Campus aims to establish a platform for faculty members to provide feedback and contribute to decision-making processes within the university. By creating a structured and formal process, the council enables the UAGC Senior Vice Provost for Online Initiatives and the Interim Chief Academic Officer and to actively seek input from faculty members on matters crucial for fulfilling the university's mission and vision.

The council serves as a body of approximately 18 faculty members, representing each academic college across campus proportionally, with one full-time faculty chair and one co-chair. This structure ensures that the collective voice of faculty members is heard and considered in discussions related to academic policies, curriculum development, institutional planning, and other

important areas. Faculty members can share their expertise, insights, concerns, and suggestions with university leadership. The Faculty Council's responsibility to maintain communication extends beyond just the faculty and administration. It also fosters effective communication with the university's student body and staff members.

### **Faculty Council Purposes**

- Share recommendations and findings regarding specific strategic issues.
- Initiate discussions and propose recommendations related to the university's effective functioning in areas affecting its academic mission.
- Make recommendations to the UAGC Interim Chief Academic Officer on topics including faculty wellness, associate faculty engagement, and supporting Culture of Care Initiatives,
  - Propose an updated faculty council charter.
  - Serve as a bridge between faculty, administration, students, and staff, fostering open communication channels to exchange ideas, concerns, and feedback in order to promote transparency, collaboration, shared governance principles, and informed decision-making within the institution.

### **Faculty Council Committees**

The following committees and initiatives reflect our university's commitment to enhancing faculty well-being, promoting shared governance practices through charter revision efforts, improving support for associate faculty members' engagement, strengthening university-wide communication channels regarding council meetings' goals and outcomes, and providing an accessible online platform for Faculty Council-related information. All subcommittees of the faculty council must submit their monthly meeting minutes, updates, and initiatives to be stored on the faculty affairs/faculty council site.

**Faculty Wellness Committee:** The Faculty Wellness Committee was established in October 2023. This committee aims to prioritize the well-being of faculty members by creating initiatives that promote work-life balance, mental health support, professional development opportunities, and fostering a positive work environment. Through regular meetings and collaboration with faculty members from different departments, the committee will develop and assess the current wellness programs and policies and make recommendations for improvement.

**Faculty Charter Revision Committee:** The Establish Faculty Charter Revision Committee is a newly formed committee tasked with reviewing and revising the existing faculty charter. This committee consists of existing faculty council representatives from various departments who will collaborate to ensure that the charter accurately reflects the needs and aspirations of the faculty council. This committee aims to create an updated charter that aligns with current academic practices while promoting transparency, shared governance, and effective decision-making processes by engaging in open discussions and soliciting stakeholder feedback.

**Associate Faculty Engagement Committee:** Recognizing the valuable contributions made by associate faculty members to UAGC's academic mission, this newly established committee focuses on enhancing their engagement within the university community. Comprised of full-time and associate faculty representatives across disciplines, this committee seeks to create opportunities for professional development explicitly tailored for associate faculty members. By fostering a sense of belonging through mentorship programs or networking events, this committee aims to strengthen relationships between full-time and associate faculty while ensuring equitable support for all teaching staff. Please stay tuned for upcoming professional development events in 2024.

**Faculty Council Webpage Development Committee:** Recognizing the importance of an accessible and informative online platform, UAGC is working on developing a dedicated webpage for the Faculty Council. This webpage will be a centralized hub for faculty members to access relevant information about council activities, meeting minutes, committee updates, and resources. This webpage aims to facilitate effective communication between faculty members and the council while promoting engagement in shared governance processes by providing easy access to essential documents and fostering transparency. While this page is under development, please take a moment to review the [Faculty Affairs Department site](#), where you can learn more about our current representatives.

### **Faculty Council Subcommittees**

The Curriculum and Assessment Steering Committee (CASC) provides:

- Leadership and support in developing and assessing academic programs in alignment with the university's mission.
- Facilitates a systematic approach for collecting, summarizing, analyzing, and disseminating data to assist department leadership with annual assessment planning, academic program review, and regional and programmatic accreditation efforts.

The Doctoral Advisory Committee (DAC) provides:

- Leadership and faculty perspectives regarding supporting and furthering doctoral culture.
- Doctoral student progression.
- Student retention is in alignment with the university's mission.

The Promotion Advisory Committee (PAC)

- The Promotion Advisory Committee reviews confidential faculty applications for promotion in rank and recommends promotion to the Dean of the applicant's college.

To all full-time or associate faculty members,

Please contact your elected [faculty council representative](#) with any questions, comments, or suggestions.

If you're interested in joining the faculty council or subcommittees for the academic year 2024-2025, please contact the assistant dean or program chair for your designated program and inquire about upcoming faculty council vacancies. We welcome all nominations beginning March 2024. Once we receive all nominations, each department within the college will hold formal elections by May of 2024 to

appoint new representatives for the upcoming academic year. Each elected representative will serve a two-year term. Your participation and involvement will significantly impact the success of our academic community. We value your voice and encourage you to help shape the future of our institution. Thank you.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me at [Yvonne.lozano@uagc.edu](mailto:Yvonne.lozano@uagc.edu).

## FACULTY VOICES

This section of the Chronicle is dedicated to recognizing our amazing faculty body's contributions to their fields! Please share your accomplishments via the [Faculty Recognition Form](#). In addition, please remember to enter your accomplishments in your profile on the [Faculty Portal](#).

### **Sandra Rebeor | Department of Behavioral Sciences**

Helped serve a mission in Guatemala.



With a local Jacksonville, Florida, mission team, Sandra and her daughter (Jackie) were able to serve several under-resourced communities near Antigua, Guatemala. They built a house for one family, supplied food for 20 families, and enriched about 200 children's afternoons by playing games, doing crafts, and dancing together. Mothers were treated to hand massages and a "shopping trip," selecting from hundreds of donated items that the mission team brought with them,

such as clothes, shoes, hygiene items, toys, and more. In addition to food bags, water filters (utilizing 5-gallon buckets) were supplied to about 20 families in need who had no or very limited access to potable (safe) water. The team instructed the families on the use and maintenance of these water filters, which should last about ten years. Seeing the smiles and witnessing the gratitude from the families was moving and will be unforgettable. It was teamwork and collaboration at its best and underscored that even seemingly small actions can go a long way in helping others and touching people in ways beyond imagination.



### **Abimbola Farinde | Department of Behavioral Sciences**

Dr. Abimbola Farinde authored two chapters in a book: Harris, C. (Ed.). (2023). *Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Practice Guidelines*. Springer Publishing Company

She also authored and published "Multimodal Pain Management or Opioid Monotherapy?" An educational and clinical article focusing on the process of adopting multimodal pain management.



### **Kerissa Kuis | Department of Advanced Management Studies**

Received a doctorate in Executive Leadership.

Kerissa completed her doctorate in executive leadership from the University of Charleston. In addition, during her studies, she became certified in Emotional Intelligence. This certification course, licensed by multi-Health Systems Inc., prepared her to educate and consult leaders on EQ and administer the EQ-I 2.0 and EQ 360 assessments.



### **Teresa Handy | Academic Engagement Center**

Invited by the Journal of Research on Leadership Education (JRLE) to join as an Editorial Board Member.



Editorial Board members provide thoughtful feedback on manuscripts and guidance to the editors and associate editors on emerging research, shifts in the field, and the peer-review process to ensure quality publications. This three-year commitment includes continuing to review journal manuscript submissions and attending the annual board meetings at the UCEA convention. An invitation to join this editorial board is an honor and recognizes Dr. Handy's scholarly contributions to the field.

### **Felix Lao | Department of Education and Liberal Arts**

Speaker at an International Conference on High Growth Businesses.

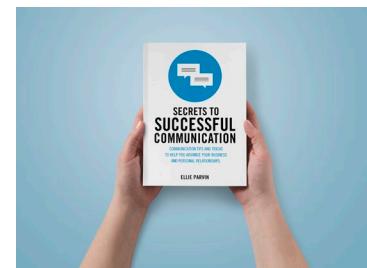
Felix was one of the main resource speakers at an international conference on high-growth businesses (live online event) on the topic: Business (Not) as usual: Business Acceleration and Growth Strategies.

### **Ellie Parvin | Department of Organizational Studies**



Published a communication book, Secrets to Successful Communication.

Parvin's book, "Secrets to Successful Communication" is a "How To" communication guide where one will find practical tips that they can apply right away to experience immediate transformations.



## Jennifer Robinson | Academic Engagement Center

I co-authored and edited the book “Becoming and Supporting Online Adjunct Faculty in the Gig Economy.”



This edited publication provides information on the many challenges and potential solutions that can be leveraged as an online adjunct faculty member. Covering topics such as collaboration with full-time colleagues, curating resources for online courses, and maintaining working relationships, this book is ideal for adjunct faculty, administrators, students, researchers, and academicians.

**Jennifer Robinson** was also elected Board Member at Large for the Association for Distance Education and Independent Learning (ADEIL).

## Kelly Olson Stewart | Department of Education and Liberal Arts

Presented at NCVC National Training Institute with Dr. Michael Stewart and Kirsten Newport.

Her presentation title was “Retired Cop to Victims Dad: Lesson Learned Supporting our Transgender Child.”

She also had a poster presentation of her research at the Phoenix Children's Research Symposium and was granted the Remarkable Poster Presentation Award. She collaborated with Dr. Michael Stewart and Dr. Vinny Chulani on the research and poster.



## Kelvin Hicks | Academic Engagement Center



Received the Congressional Veterans Commendation Award.

Army veteran, Kelvin Hicks, was awarded the Congressional Veteran Commendation by Congressman Pat Fallon. The ceremony was held on Friday, November 10th, 2023, at the Plano Flags of Honor in Plano, Texas. The Congressional Veteran Commendation is nominations-based and designed to recognize the sacrifices and devotion to serving our country and the community service of Veterans living within Texas' Fourth Congressional District.

Hicks was awarded the following at the ceremony:

- Flag on display at the Plano Flags of Honor
- Certificate of Congressional Commendation
- The United States flag that has been flown over the U.S. Capitol, along with an announcement of the award entered into the Congressional Record

- Name and a short biography published on fallon.house.gov under the Congressional Veteran Commendation program page.

#### **Jessica Koehler | Department of Behavioral Sciences**

Published an article in Psychology Today.

Jessica's article "Helping Adult Learners by Guiding from the Sidelines" has been designated an Essential Read in the Education Category of Psychology Today. She is deeply invested in bridging the gap between psychology as a science and its practical applications in learning and everyday life.



#### **NEW FACULTY INTRODUCTIONS**

# New UAGC Faculty | Fall 2023



 THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
GLOBAL CAMPUS

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#### **IN CASE YOU MISSED IT.**

In an effort to make your inboxes more manageable, the faculty communication digest is sent weekly with a synopsis of critical faculty-focused news and events linking to the complete content. Instead of searching for individual emails, we hope you will use this targeted weekly summary to declutter your inbox and refocus your time.

[Visit the Faculty Communication Digest archive to view all the latest news and events.](#)

## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

### We want to hear from you!

*The UAGC Chronicle* supports the entire academic community's contribution to the UAGC mission of providing a community of caring and guidance for adult online learners. Therefore, our publication promotes content that addresses the theoretical underpinnings and practical execution of this mission: academic research on instructional best practices, curricular innovation, and student support strategies; examples and resources that foster a community of practice; news of the progress of institutional student success initiatives; professional development opportunities; and – most importantly – the stories and successes of the people who shape our university.

To make this publication an authentic representation of our diverse faculty body, we encourage submissions from associate faculty and UAGC staff. Please consider the questions below as you craft your submission.

- What is your purpose in writing?
- What are you trying to accomplish?
- How does this information tie into university initiatives?
- Why should UAGC Constituents care about the information you are providing?
- What are the next steps, or what is your call to action?
- Who is your audience?
- How do you want to present your information? Would graphics or other visuals supplement your submission?

For more details and submission guidelines, [please visit the UAGC Chronicle page.](#)

**Thank you for reading! We hope you enjoyed this issue.**



**THE UAGC CHRONICLE STAFF**



Jacquelyn Bullis  
Editor



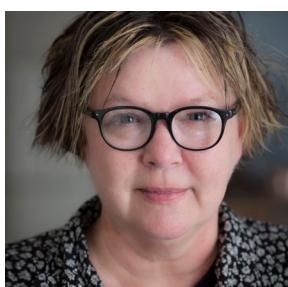
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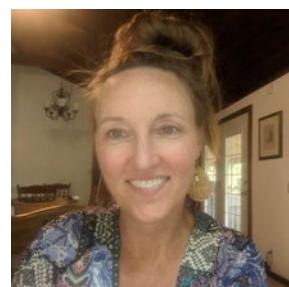
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**Christopher Foster**

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**Thank you!**